

which it was decided "that the enemy having retreated from Manassas to Gordonsville behind the Rappahannock and Rapidan, it is the opinion of generals commanding corps that the operations to be carried on will be best undertaken from Old Point Comfort, between the York and James rivers."

Operating against Richmond from Fortress Monroe as a base, it would be desirable to use both the James and York rivers as lines of communication and supply; but the appearance on the 8th of March of the Confederate iron-clad Merrimac off Fortress Monroe, and the havoc created in the Federal fleet, imperilled the adoption of the peninsular plan of campaign, but on the 9th of March the Monitor, as invented by Ericsson, engaged the Merrimac near Fortress Monroe, and so clearly established its superiority over the latter as to remove considerable of the apprehension entertained in regard to the Merrimac's ability to embarrass operations. Even if the James river remained closed, the line of the York and its tributaries was open.

While the army was being marched toward Manassas I obtained my first experience with cavalry advance guards. General Stoneman, chief of cavalry, was directed to push a large force of cavalry along the line of the Orange and Alexandria railroad to determine the position of the enemy, and if possible drive him across the Rappahannock. Upon arriving at Catlett's station, near Cedar Run, the enemy's pickets were discerned in considerable force on a hill about one mile in our front. The Fifth United States Cavalry, to which I then belonged, was in advance. Upon discerning the pickets a halt was ordered and intelligence of the enemy's presence sent to General Stoneman. An order was soon received from that officer directing that the pickets of the enemy be driven back across Cedar Run. When this order reached us the officers of the

regiment were generally assembled in a group at the head of the column, Major Charles J. Whiting in command. I at once asked permission to take my company, the command of which I accidentally held owing to the absence of the captain and first lieutenant, and perform the duty of driving in the pickets. Permission being accorded, I marched the company to the front, formed line, and advanced toward the pickets, then plainly in view, and interested observers of our movements.

Advancing without opposition to the base of the hill upon which the pickets were posted, when within convenient distance I gave the command "Charge" for the first time. My company responded gallantly, and away we went. Our adversaries did not wait to receive us, but retreated hurriedly and crossed the bridge over Cedar Run, setting fire to it immediately after. We pursued them to the bank of the run and then exchanged several shots with the enemy, now safely posted on the opposite side. Being unable to advance across the stream, and exposed to a serious fire from small arms, I ordered my command to retire, which it did in excellent order, but not until one man, private John W. Bryaud, had been shot in the head, fortunately not seriously, and one horse wounded. Battles and skirmishes at that time were unfamiliar events to the men composing the Army of the Potomac, and the little episode just recorded furnished a topic for general discussion and comment. The company that had been engaged in the affair was praised by its companions, while it was a question whether private Bryaud suffered most from his wound or the numerous and inquiring visits of the enterprising representatives of the press, each anxious and determined to gather and record for his particular journal all the details connected with the shedding of the first blood by the Army of the Potomac.

G. A. CUSTER.

## NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

### ACCOUNT OF HIS ADMINISTRATION.—NO. 1.

THE nomination of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 was an unexpected event to the active party politicians of the period. Men of all parties, previous to the session of the convention at Chicago, supposed that the delegates were to assemble and perform a prearranged part. Several names were, it is true, suggested as competitors, but only one of them seemed formidable, and the first ballot taken demonstrated that his supporters were more numerous and better prepared and disciplined than the others.

The result, so different from general expectation, proved that the convention, while it disappointed almost all of the mere party men who take upon themselves the management and direction of these irresponsible nominating conventions, was on that occasion fortunate in its selection of a candidate. It has not always been the case that these party gatherings, which are convened for the purpose of forestalling the legitimate and legal operation of the Constitution, have been as judicious in their selection as the convention at Chicago in 1860. Indeed, this process of making a President, to which parties have for some years resorted, is demoralizing in its effects and calculated to elevate small men who are intriguers, or who have active intriguing friends, over the best intellects and highest statesmanship of the country. It moreover tends beyond any scheme yet devised to the overthrow of State individuality and State action, by which our Federal system is likely to be undermined and the government ultimately centralized and consolidated. Every fourth year the people are stimulated and aroused from one end of the country to the other, by public meetings and by the press, and are excited in almost every conceivable way to defeat State action

and centralize the country on some aspiring individual for the office of President in a way different from the prescribed constitutional method. Contentions, alienations, strife, and bitterness are kindled. Delegates, many of them of exceptionable character and unworthy of confidence, men, some of whom are willing to be bribed, and if bribed cannot be punished, are chosen by persons no better than themselves to assemble in convention and dictate to the people whom they shall vote for and elect to be their Chief Magistrate. The framers of the Constitution, anticipating many of these difficulties, and aware also of the dangers that attend embittered contested popular national elections under ambitious and unscrupulous leaders, endeavored to place the choice of Chief Magistrate remote from public commotion and angry controversy by intermediate and contingent agencies. The Constitution as originally framed provided that each State shall appoint a number of electors equal to the whole number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled. These electors, so appointed, were to meet in their respective States and vote for two persons, etc. The phraseology is peculiar. The President, Vice-President, Senators, and members of Congress must be *chosen* or *elected* to their respective offices, but electors of President and Vice-President are to be *appointed*. "No Senator or Representative, etc., shall be *appointed* an elector." "Two Senators shall be *chosen* by the Legislature," etc. Members of the House of Representatives "shall be *chosen* every second year by the people."

It was obviously the intention of the framers of the Constitution that the electors should be appointed, not chosen or elected by a popular vote. They were in fact appointed by the

Legislature of most of the States in the early years of the government. The Legislature of each State was to direct in what manner electors should be appointed—whether by a concurrent vote or a joint vote of the Legislature, or by the Governor and Council, or otherwise, the Constitution did not prescribe—that was reserved to the States respectively. It was clearly not to be a popular election. The electors appointed were to meet, not collectively at the seat of government or at any central point, but in their respective States, and to cast their votes for two persons for President and Vice-President. They were not, however, to concentrate or specify which of the two should be preferred, but one at least of the persons voted for shall not be an inhabitant of the same State with themselves.

This machinery to make a President, it will be remembered, was before the days of modern telegraphs or railroads; and as all the electors appointed were to vote in their respective States on the same day, it was believed that concert, centralization, combination, personal strifes, or any extensive national controversy would be obviated. Men of mature age and character, in whose judgment and intelligence the public had confidence, would, it was expected, be appointed; and the electors, possessing patriotism, integrity, and candid judgment that would lead them to discuss the subject dispassionately when they met in the States, would vote for two men, one of whom might be a local favorite, but one at least would be qualified to administer the government. It was not expected that any one after General Washington, on whom all were united in the first instance, would be likely to receive the required constitutional majority, and be chosen by the vote of the electors in their colleges. In that event the electoral vote would be merely a nomination. The Representatives in Congress would then, voting by States, each State to cast one vote, select from the five persons who received the

highest number of electoral votes the individual who should be President. By this process a number of statesmen, five at least, would come before the country. It was anticipated that not only the excitement and madness attending a popular election of the Executive or Chief Magistrate would be avoided, but the federal principle of State equality would be preserved and enforced in the final determination, when there was non-agreement of a majority of the electors. Unfortunately for the successful working of this carefully elaborated plan, there was in the violently contested Presidential election of 1800 such unity among the Republican opponents of the Adams administration, that there was a tie between Jefferson and Burr, who had each an equal number of votes and a majority over their competitors; but neither of the two principal candidates received a higher vote than the other. Every elector who voted for them, whether appointed by the Legislature or chosen by the people, intended Jefferson should be President. Under these circumstances the defeated party, who had voted for other candidates, and were against both Jefferson and Burr, claimed that the choice of the republic was for Burr; and as by the Constitution Congress was in the event of a tie vote to decide between them, an exasperated and almost revolutionary proceeding took place. This unhappy intrigue and abuse of power, which threatened for a time the national tranquillity, led to a change, called an amendment of the Constitution, by which the political fabric that had been so carefully and elaborately constructed in 1787 was broken down. Congressional caucuses and irresponsible national conventions, the hotbeds of party and personal intrigue, were substituted. The federal principle of political equality of the States, essential to State individuality and the distinctive rights and sovereignty of the small States, in the event of no choice by the electors—one of the great compromises in the formation of the

Constitution—has been undermined. Consolidation and centralization, which override the principles that led to the Union, have in practice become a popular doctrine, and irresponsible gatherings, called conventions, composed to a great extent of active party men and intriguing partisan politicians who make politics a trade, virtually dictate to the country who shall be the Chief Magistrate and first officer in the republic. Men of little experience, and with very slight qualifications for civil service, but who for that reason are considered more available than statesmen of undoubted ability and well known public service, are often selected by these irresponsible conventions, and no alternative is left the people but to vote for one or the other of the inferior persons so designated.

The electors themselves are no longer permitted to vote for two individuals for President, and thereby prevent the public mind from concentrating on one ambitious aspirant; but under the amendment of 1804 they "shall name in their ballots the person voted for as President," and should there be no choice, Congress shall select from the three highest instead of from the *five* highest candidates. It is a curious fact that this amendment, which insidiously saps the federal principle and tends to consolidation, was introduced and adopted by the party opposed to centralization, and who were *par excellence* the advocates of States' rights. A perversion and abuse of constitutional power by a defeated and excited minority was the moving cause for this amendment or change of the organic law, which has been followed by combinations and illegitimate proceedings, where active intrigues have prevailed in the election of Presidents. The electors now are mere dummies, intermediate agents, allowed no judgment or discretion, but are pledged instruments to vote for such persons as the illegitimate nominating convention dictates. It is worthy of consideration whether it would not be an improvement, under the change that was made

in 1804, and the usage that has followed, were the people to vote direct for President and Vice-President.

The nomination of Mr. Lincoln was, as has been remarked, a general disappointment to active politicians. Partisans in each of the old political organizations, expecting a different selection before the result was announced, had prepared themselves for the conflict—one for attack, the other for defense—in the confident belief that William H. Seward would be the Republican candidate. The managing party politicians of New York, who to a great extent controlled the Republicans of that State by a profligate system of legislative grants, bounties, and favors, possessed themselves of a large amount of funds to secure the success of their favorite; and their scarcely less objectionable opponents in Washington and elsewhere, not doubting that the Albany candidate would be the Republican nominee, shaped their tactics accordingly. In consequence of the unexpected turn of affairs at the Republican National Convention, the machinery of the old parties was thrown out of gearing, and some heavy political guns were spiked or exploded without effect.

The overthrow of an administration and of a dominant party and its policy after a severe contest must be almost inevitably a strain upon the government, and will doubtless in the future as in the past be productive of consequences more or less painful to the country. A sweeping removal of incumbents, especially of those who are non-partisan, but who are familiar with their duties and the usages and traditions of the government, attended by the introduction of inexperienced men in their places, must cause more or less derangement, and devolve greatly increased labor on the principals or heads of departments, who are held responsible for the faithful and successful administration of affairs.

Mr. Lincoln was elected by a large majority of the electoral votes, in con-

formity with all the requirements of the Constitution, but was in a minority. The Democratic party, which had for years wielded the government, and was still all-powerful in numbers, had become factious, demoralized, and divided on questions sectional in their character, and which to some extent violated fundamental principles. The newly formed Republican organization was composed of persons not entirely homogeneous in political principles and opinions, but they were on the exciting questions of the day united in action. Another party, distinct from both the great organizations, styling itself American, or Know-Nothing, made up of incongruous elements, but with candidates of recognized intelligence and ability, received a considerable support.

Mr. Lincoln's election was in a great measure the result of Democratic dissensions which had their origin in a misuse and abuse of power, and in a departure from those professed principles of strict adherence to the Constitution and regard for the Union and reserved sovereignty of the States which had given that party vitality and strength. Immediately after the election, and months before Mr. Lincoln entered upon his duties or had performed any official act whatever, the restless politicians of South Carolina—oligarchs in principle—who claimed for their feeble State absolute sovereignty, commenced a revolutionary career, and their disunion example was followed by other States, claiming the "inalienable right to abolish the existing government" and to establish a new one, which in the utopian and imaginary excess of party they fancied might be more acceptable than that to which they belonged and owed allegiance.

During the winter of 1860-61 these seceding or sectional States were active in organizing and preparing for a conflict with the national authority, while the Federal Government, thus threatened, supinely submitted to the seizure of forts, arsenals, and the pub-

lic property in the seceding States. It was claimed that the right to resist the general Government and destroy the Union was "inalienable," but that for the Government to assert its authority, maintain its integrity and the unity of the States, and retain possession of the national property in the seceding States, was an exercise of arbitrary and tyrannical power which could not be acquiesced in or permitted. The outgoing Executive declared that a State could not be coerced. Consequently treason or infidelity to the Federal Government must go unpunished, but disobedience to the State which resisted the national authority should be attended with confiscation and death. Congress, while it did not endorse or assent to the theory of the President, manifested a strange apathy or indifference to the impending storm, and adopted no measures to recover and hold the public property illegally seized, or to vindicate the national authority, but whiled away the winter of 1861 in factious controversy scarcely less reprehensible than Executive imbecility.

It is not necessary to discuss in this place the political doctrinal points of that period, when fidelity to party seemed with a large portion of the community more binding and more sacred than constitutional obligations, and when obedience to the mandates of a State whose authorities were in flagrant rebellion, defying and resisting the national Government in its exercise of rightful, legal, delegated, and constitutional power, was enforced by local law. Whatever may have been the real views of the leaders of secession, there is no doubt a large portion of their followers and adherents entertained the belief that in the event of a collision between the State and national Governments it was their duty to obey the State without regard to the merits of the controversy or the legality of its enactments. Doubt and confusion prevailed among the masses of the people in consequence of the divided or double alle-

giance which all owed to the State and Federal Governments. The powers of the States being primitive and those of the Federal Government derivative—the latter being created by the States, which had relinquished and delegated to the general Government certain specified powers that are indispensably necessary to the welfare of all—gave to the malcontents apparent justification for the assumption that any State which became discontented had a right to resume for itself the powers which, with others, it had granted away for the common benefit and general welfare. Without discriminating as to the condition and rightful authority of each, the secessionists claimed that any one of the States could resume and exercise the rights which had been conceded to the general Government, though to resume that authority would be destructive of the general Government and of the national Federal Union. While these were the doctrines of one class of extremists, the centralists, on the other extreme, then and subsequently, claimed for the Federal Government absolute authority over the States, insisted that it could divide them and create new States by such division, could enlarge or diminish State jurisdiction, and deny States representation in either branch of Congress. One class asserted the right to secede and leave the Union; the other maintained authority in the central Government to exclude or to expel States from the Union and deprive them of their constitutional and reserved original rights.

It was in the midst of these conflicting opinions, but the results of either then not fully developed or understood, that Mr. Lincoln reached Washington and was inaugurated. His position was in every respect not only of the gravest responsibility, but of extreme delicacy and embarrassment. He had been elected according to the prescribed forms of the Constitution as amended, but was chosen by a minority of the people. Preliminary steps for a dissolution of the Union

and the overthrow of the government had already been taken in one section of the country. The retiring administration had witnessed with meek submission the seizure of forts, arsenals, and custom-houses by the insurrectionists, declaring amid the falling ruins its inability to coerce a State and thus preserve the national integrity. The Thirty-sixth Congress, with almost equal imbecility, beheld with apparent indifference this disintegration and threatened downfall of the civil fabric, and adjourned without any effective legislative preparation for the impending conflict. The republic was rent by factions. A large section was in open rebellion; another bordering and sympathizing section south of the Potomac and the Ohio stood in a defiant attitude, declaring if the Federal Government attempted to enforce its authority by supplying or reinforcing the garrisons, or by taking possession of the national property in the seceding States, it would be considered a tyrannical, aggressive, and arbitrary exercise of power; an attempt at coercion and subjugation which would justify and call for united resistance. On his journey to Washington to enter upon the labors of government, the President elect was warned by his selected Secretary of State, and by the General-in-Chief of the army, that his way through Baltimore was beset with assassins. To avoid and defeat them, Mr. Lincoln, against his own opinion, was persuaded by these advisers, and others who were associated with them and in their confidence, to pass through that city *incog.* and in advance of the train which had been prescribed in the programme of his journey. The hegira from Harrisburg, and his unexpected arrival in Washington twenty-four hours in advance of the specified time, were the cause of much surprise and no little regret to his friends, and of sneers and ridicule on the part of his opponents. This extraordinary but perhaps necessary proceeding was planned by Mr. Seward and General Scott, whose suspicions had been ex-

cited by the detectives in their employ. Subsequent events in Baltimore gave some confirmation to apprehensions which were censured at the time as a mere contrivance to alarm the President elect, and place him under obligations to one of his chosen counsellors.

The difficulties which confronted the President on the day of his inauguration, and which the Administration encountered daily and hourly in the spring of 1861, were never fully appreciated nor rightly understood. They were only known and felt by the actors on whom at that momentous period devolved the responsibility of government, most of whom were called from retirement or seclusion into the public service under the most extraordinary circumstances which ever took place in human experience. A majority of the people had voted against or had declined to vote for Mr. Lincoln, and were still unwilling to give him their support. Nearly one-half, under the discipline of party, were determined not to acquiesce in his policy or measures, whatever they might be. The country underwent not only a change of administration but of parties, carrying in its train the overthrow and downfall of a long established dynasty, which for a series of years had shaped the course of the government and directed public affairs. But the crisis involved more than a mere change of men, or a revolution of parties. There was a sectional combination which designedly improved the occasion to effect the subversion of the government and a dismemberment of the Federal Union. The very danger apprehended by the framers of the Constitution from excited national parties, which, deaf to patriotism, would enlist the passions and animosities of the whole people in a popular election, had occurred. The founders of the government had, as already mentioned, foreseen and sought to avoid such national disturbance in the choice of Chief Magistrate by a federal system, first in the *appointment* of electors on a federal

basis by the separate action of the States, and in the event of no one receiving a majority of the electoral vote, a choice was to be effected by the Representatives in Congress, voting by States, all of them equal in sovereignty and political rights, each State of the Union to have by their Representatives in Congress one vote. But this carefully prepared political machinery had been interrupted and broken down, first, by *choosing* the electors by the people instead of *appointing* them in such manner as the Legislature of each State might direct; and secondly, by the amendment of the Constitution in 1804, adopted in consequence of an attempted fraud by violent partisans in the election of 1801, when the defeated party sought to supersede Jefferson by electing Burr. Congressional caucuses and national conventions intervened thereafter to prevent legal constitutional action. Irresponsible delegates of opposing factions gathered in these national assemblies and selected candidates under the organization and discipline of party; no alternative remained for the people but to vote for electors pledged to one or the other of the candidates thus designated.

Mr. Lincoln was confronted at the beginning of his administration by a large majority who had voted for others in preference to him. There would have been a majority in Congress to oppose any extreme views had he possessed them, provided the Senators and Representatives from the cotton States had remained at their post. But to have remained would not have been secession. A brief trial would, the leaders well knew, have satisfied the people that the foreboding and threatened evils which were pronounced against black Republican rule were wholly imaginative and false; hence a dissolution by secession or withdrawal from the Union before the new administration was fairly launched, became necessary to consummate the schemes of the chiefs in the great conspiracy.

No cause whatever existed for breaking up the government. The pretext at the beginning of sectional strife had been that there were higher duties on imports than were necessary, and that laws were enacted to protect certain industries and monopolies, rather than to raise a revenue by internal taxation; these alleged grievances were declared so offensive, the burden so great and so unequal in its operation, that John C. Calhoun and his disciples felt themselves compelled to throw off the load which they pronounced intolerable and insupportable, first by an attempt to nullify the federal laws. Defeated in the nullification movement, the same discontented spirits resorted to another; they soon and without cause professed great alarm for the institution of slavery, which they represented to be in jeopardy from the preaching and theories of abolitionists, and all in the free States were denounced as abolitionists. This was an appeal calculated and intended to excite alarm and rouse the feelings of all interested in slave property; yet so groundless was the pretext that more than a quarter of a century of unceasing declamatory assertion and violent denunciation and invective were requisite for the consummation of the disunion conspiracy. Professing ultra States' rights and anti-central principles, these sectional leaders, nevertheless, insisted that slavery was national, not local; that the institution demanded central protection, and must have from the general Government additional guarantees for its preservation and perpetuation. While clamorous to be let alone and permitted to have their own way, they invoked federal power and federal legislation in behalf of slavery, which was not national and which existed only by permission of the States. Mr. Lincoln and his friends denied that slavery was the offspring or creature of the republic, maintained that it was local and belonged to the States respectively where it was authorized, and that those States could not and should not be in-

terfered with, but that they should be let alone to enjoy or reject it without interference or molestation by the central Government.

Party contentions had on repeated occasions, in both the State and general governments, been carried to extreme lengths on the subject of slavery, from an early period. For forty years this controversy, agitated and discussed by humanitarians on one hand and the advocates of slavery on the other, had been fostered by ambitious party leaders. When in 1820 and again in 1850 Congress and the public mind had become embittered and inflamed so as to almost threaten the public tranquillity, Henry Clay, a popular party leader, at the critical culminating moment came forward with a proposition to *compromise* the subject in dispute, and thus allay the storm which he had contributed as much as and perhaps more than any one to raise. His success in repeatedly effecting a peaceable if not always satisfactory or beneficent adjustment of this and other questions, had procured for him the name of the "Great Compromiser," which partisan adherents were delighted to bestow on him as their political chief. From 1820 to 1850 he had been the aspiring but unsuccessful chief of a party, formidable from its wealth and numbers, which favored central power; and his frequent plans of compromise, often in derogation of the Constitution, were by many supposed his highest claims and best qualifications for the office of President. The long political training which the country had experienced and his friends followed under the tutelage of this distinguished legislator, begat a policy of temporizing expedients, often by a sacrifice of principle, which was not always useful or productive of the happiest results. But the fame of the "Great Compromiser" stimulated others of easy political virtue, seeking notoriety, and who were not strongly wedded to principle, to imitate this eloquent leader.

During the winter of 1861 numerous imitators of Mr. Clay appeared with schemes and propositions to compromise existing difficulties—most of them temporizing and unworthy—by concessions to the seceders, and with devices to conciliate and satisfy those who were determined not to be satisfied. Some of these compromises were by proposed amendments to the Constitution; others, not to be restrained by the organic law, advocated extraordinary and unwarranted legislation, and all by a sacrifice of principle. The authors of these propositions, apprehensive of disaster by a rigid adherence to the Constitution, were generally sincere and patriotic, if not always profound, wise, or sagacious, in their schemes. Many of their associates, less sincere, professed a readiness and anxiety to effect a compromise, but were by no means earnest, if they were not actually indifferent or opposed to any arrangement. A majority of Congress, embracing men of both parties, opposed any legislative action. The secessionists on their part really wanted and were determined on disunion; others, opposed to them, were convinced that no legal measure or legitimate legislation would satisfy the faction which for thirty years had labored to break up the Union and overthrow the government. Under these circumstances the Thirty-sixth Congress closed its term and adjourned without doing anything toward reconciliation, by peaceable or other means, and without any preparatory legislation or the adoption of any measures to strengthen the incoming administration in any effort it might make to preserve the national integrity.

Political party organizations then as in after years, more than constitutional obligations, controlled Congress. Party discipline had created an antagonism in States where there was really little difference of principle; but such was the influence of association and the discipline and imperious exaction of party, that thousands excused and defended the doctrine of secession who

had no intention of favoring national dismemberment. Mingled with this partyism, and soon a part of it, was sectional animosity, which contributed to generate a hostile feeling toward States and people whose industries were different. The right of secession had been agitated by aspiring and theoretical politicians, and discussed in promiscuous gatherings and in the political papers by men who in early stages of the discussion had little or no idea that secession would ever be put in practice, or that to effect it there would be a resort to arms. Gradually, however, the doctrine became a familiar topic, and at length began to be seriously and favorably entertained, not only in South Carolina, where an oligarchy entertained and cherished extreme views, but the political party managers in States South, particularly those on the Gulf, adopted the disorganizing and revolutionary doctrine that secession was a reserved right. Politicians and party conventions in the cotton States busied themselves for years in inculcating the right of secession, and were tolerated and listened to by the people without any expectation of a resort to extreme measures, and therefore without serious rebuke; but after long training, with labored design, the disunionists made advances, and finally obtained control of the local State governments.

On the election of Lincoln the leaders proceeded to put their revolutionary schemes in operation, and were recognized and upheld by the governments of those States. Until then the great body of the people in the States South had been passive disbelievers in and were opposed to disunion. They had witnessed and participated in political party controversies apparently as violent; had for thirty years heard from the party teachers of the nullifying school empty threats of resistance to Federal authority and denunciations of the Federal Government as tyrannical, arbitrary, and oppressive; all of which excitements had passed off in peaceful

adjustments of every real or alleged grievance. They were willing to believe that such would be the ultimate termination of the secession agitation; but the secessionists had in the mean time, by persevering, persistent assiduity, succeeded in securing possession of the civil administration of nearly every State south of the Potomac. When, therefore, Mr. Lincoln commenced his administration, the governments of these States were arrayed against him, and one-half of them against all Federal authority. In those States which had not already passed ordinances of secession, the active, calculating, and leading politicians were in avowed sympathy with the secessionists, and those citizens who rejected the doctrine and still adhered to the Union and maintained the supremacy of the Federal Government did so at their peril. They were denounced as traitors to the State, to which it was imperiously asserted they owed first and the highest allegiance. All in the insurrectionary States who persisted in supporting the Union and the Federal Government, after the passage of the ordinance of secession by their State, were subject to be proceeded against as traitors, their property to be confiscated, and they and their families imprisoned and punish-

ed. Between the upper and nether millstone of the Federal and State Governments the citizen was brought in jeopardy, and as the action of the State was more prompt and decisive than of the national Government, no choice was left the citizen but unconditional submission to the usurping State government, if he regarded the welfare of his family and the preservation of his property, which was doomed to confiscation if he continued a faithful, adhering citizen of the United States. Under the usurped, radical, and revolutionary ordinances and decrees of the seceding States, and the neglect of the general Government, submission to the arbitrary local decrees and enactments was the only alternative left to the resident citizen. The same citizen, thus coerced and compelled to submit, against his wish, will, and conviction, to the dictation of the State, was a few years later, after the rebellion was suppressed, disfranchised by a fragmentary Congress and denied the right of representation in the national Government. If true to the Union, he was pronounced a traitor to the State; if he submitted to and obeyed the laws of the State, he was treated as guilty of treason by Congress, which assumed to exercise both executive and legislative powers.

GIDEON WELLES.

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### DAY AND NIGHT.

**M**OST sweet it is to stand when shades are free—  
Loosed from the light, that fixed them here and there,  
To hold their hushed dominion everywhere—  
To stand and commune with them silently.  
For one was bound by daylight's tyrant glare  
The faithful follower of an ever to be;  
And one was forced—light fetters needed he—  
To wait all day upon a maiden fair.  
And each then wore the shape of love or loathing  
Of him whom day, like Fate, his master made;  
Now all have doffed their loved or hated clothing,  
And mingle o'er half earth in shapeless shade.  
Who knows—are we but shadows thrown of light?  
And if our life be day, is death as night?

F. W. BOURDILLON.

# THE GALAXY.

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## NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

ACCOUNT OF HIS ADMINISTRATION.—NO. 2.

**A**T the time of Mr. Lincoln's inauguration, the actual existing status and the future of the people—unionists and secessionists—to what extent the law would be resisted on one hand or enforced on the other, were uncertain, indefinite, and unknown. Multitudes, a majority without doubt through the whole of the States South, with perhaps the exception of South Carolina, who had from party considerations or from sincere apprehensions opposed the election of Mr. Lincoln, acquiesced, though disappointed in the result, and were ready to support his administration; but they were not permitted to do this by the leaders who had possession of the seceding State governments. The President, though well aware of the mischievous intent of the prominent persons in this conspiracy, was reluctant to believe they would resort to armed resistance, and entered upon his duties with the kindest and most tolerant feelings toward all, whether friends or opponents of his election.

But party spirit had been moved to excess, and became virulent. Extreme partisans in the free States stimulated and encouraged discontent, and were scarcely less malignant in their feelings than the secessionists. In the slave States the positive element overpowered the mild, passive, and peaceably disposed friends of the Union and

of social order, who deprecated and shrank from violence. The patriotic citizens knew that there was no cause for rebellion or revolution, and, relying on the Federal Government, as in the days of Jackson, for protection against rebels, were comparatively quiet and inert. Bold measures and a decisive and energetic policy on the part of the Federal Government, especially the Executive, at the commencement, such as had been displayed by Jackson in the days of nullification, were necessary for their security, and would at the same time have aroused them to duty and to action.

The executive power of the Government is by the Constitution vested in the President; and to pretermit or disregard the legal and necessary exercise of this power thus delegated to him may be as culpable, and in an emergency may be a greater wrong to the country than the assumption or usurpation of undelegated authority, to preserve the national integrity. Mr. Buchanan had been an intelligent Senator, but was inherently a timid and always a calculating politician, sensitive as regarded his party standing, in consequence of early political equivocations, and was undoubtedly more obedient to party requirements from that circumstance. Intending to do what was about right, but usually relying more on the opinion of his asso-

ciates than his own convictions—always cautious and irresolute when there was responsibility—he was in those closing days of his administration, with broken and divided counsels, feeble, irresolute, vacillating, and almost imbecile of purpose. Most of his cabinet advisers were unfaithful. The forts of the South were neglected, most of them were without garrisons, and there was stationed in none of the discontented States a military force properly commanded, to sustain the Government and enforce the laws, or to form a nucleus around which the patriotic citizens could rally to maintain the national supremacy against the seceding State governments. The Federal troops, instead of being stationed where they could render efficient service, had been sent, under Twiggs, a traitor and a renegade, to western Texas, or to territories still more remote, from which or from Texas they could not be speedily recalled. The Southern maritime frontier was in scarcely better condition. The commanders of the navy yards at Pensacola and Norfolk, the only naval stations in the Southern States, were old and inefficient officers, who, if not unfaithful themselves, were surrounded by energetic subordinates that were in sympathy with the secessionists, and ultimately proved faithless. Most of the sailors and naval vessels in commission were on foreign stations. Those which constituted what was called the "home squadron" were in the West Indies or the Gulf of Mexico, about as inaccessible and remote from immediate communication, except through the insurrectionary region, as the squadron in the Mediterranean. The treasury was empty, and the national credit had been impaired by the conduct of Cobb, the seceding Secretary, who, until he retired, had charge of the finances. On the change of administration the government was, in all its departments, in a dilapidated and deranged condition, which had been evidently designed by those who had in view a dissolution of the Union.

In the construction of his Cabinet, some of the characteristics of Mr. Lincoln, and the purpose by which he was to be governed in his administration, were developed. New issues had given birth to a new political organization. Old parties had become dismembered and broken into factions. The Democrats were divided, and had presented the previous fall two candidates—Breckenridge and Douglas—for the Presidency. Douglas received and was the undoubted choice of a large majority of his party. He had, however, but few votes from his old opponents. Breckenridge had among his supporters such of the dismembered Whig element of the South as did not give their votes to John Bell, the "Know-Nothing" candidate. If there were men at the South in favor of Mr. Lincoln, or who had a preference for the Republican party and principles, such was the prevailing prejudice and intolerance in that section that no full ticket of electors was permitted to appear. No press was allowed to advocate Lincoln's election, and to express an opinion favorable to either Republican principles or the Republican candidates was attended with no inconsiderable personal peril. The factious and fragmentary condition of the Democratic party, and the violent sectional hostility of the South toward Republicans, had the effect of strengthening and uniting the new party, composed of both Whigs and Democrats, in the free States, and secured for Mr. Lincoln the electoral vote of each and all of them except New Jersey.

Mr. Lincoln was well aware that it was no old and beaten path which he was to travel in administering the government, with veteran associates who had been lifelong political friends engaged in an organization for the same cause, but that without precedents to guide, an untrdden course lay before him, requiring an entirely new and different departure from that which had been pursued by either of his predecessors. Not only was he to estab-

lish an administration differing in many respects from theirs, and to consolidate a new organization, but he was to do this with materials which, in political principles, had been discordant and antagonistic in the past. These previously opposing elements he was to reconcile and bring into harmonious action, and at the same time encounter a violent and unsparing opposition. Quietly, without ostentation, and at the same time without just offence to any, or submission to professed and intrusive advice and influence, voluntarily tendered and pressed upon him, he selected for his constitutional advisers persons who, in their antecedents, had politically been opposed, but who were nevertheless representative men of the various elements which elected him, and constituted at his inauguration the Republican party. In his choice of counsellors he kept in view the original purpose of consolidating these elements into one great united party, which would sustain his administration, and ultimately embrace all who desired to maintain the Constitution and the Union. This purpose, distinctly and honestly avowed, led him to invite his own rival Republican competitors to participate in the administration, and also induced him to associate in his Cabinet men of differing political antecedents. Such a policy, however, did not comport with the views and wishes of some of his friends, who, in the overthrow of the Democrats, had anticipated a Whig triumph rather than Republican success. The pressure upon him in that regard, with a view of reviving the Whig party, was for a time very great; but while he patiently listened and calmly discussed the subject, no argument or appeals caused him to change his original purpose of a Republican administration, without identification with past or committal to current controversies or either of the old political organizations.

The individuals composing his Cabinet had but slight previous personal

intimacy with Mr. Lincoln, or with each other. There was no concerted or combined effort among the members themselves, or by their respective friends, to influence the President in selecting his advisers, with the exception, perhaps, of a few managing politicians in New York and Pennsylvania. A very strenuous and persistent effort was made by certain partisans in New York, who had been Whigs, to exclude Mr. Chase, and also to prevent the appointment of either Mr. Blair or Mr. Welles.

In the nominating convention at Chicago Mr. Seward had been the chief competitor with Mr. Lincoln, and being also a well known politician and statesman, holding at the time the position of Senator from the State of New York, it was not only desired by his friends, but supposed and generally expected, that he would be offered the State Department. It was intimated by some of his confidential friends that while the tender of this place was due as a matter of courtesy to Mr. Seward, that gentleman would probably decline accepting the office. In that event it was the intention of Mr. Lincoln, who knew not with what sincerity these doubts of the Senator's acceptance were made, to have invited Mr. Chase to be his Secretary of State. Otherwise the latter gentleman was invited to administer the finances. There was on the part of both Mr. Seward and Mr. Chase coyness as to accepting a seat in the Cabinet, which, as regarded the former, was more affected than sincere. Mr. Chase may have honestly hesitated to take the second position, for he was very ambitious, and had just been a second time elected to represent Ohio for six years in the Senate, and his taste, studies, and abilities were unquestionably better adapted to legislative than purely financial service. While, therefore, he could not have hesitated for a moment to go into the State Department, he was not, with his personal aspirations, so ready to relinquish his senatorial term of six years in order to

accept a seat in the Cabinet subject to the pleasure of the President for its continuance, and which, moreover, placed him, while entering upon duties with which he was not familiar, in a position inferior in public estimation to that of his rival political competitor.

On the great questions which were pending, and which then divided the country, these two gentlemen were not in strict accord. Mr. Seward, less tenacious of principle, and more pliable in his nature, had expressed a willingness to yield his opinions on the slavery question, and to so revise the Constitution as to make it conform to the demands of the secessionists. Mr. Chase, on the contrary, was opposed to any concession or compromise which should commit the national Government to the cause or to the perpetuation of slavery beyond the limits prescribed in the Constitution. Mr. Lincoln was well aware of the differences between these two officers—differences which extended to his supporters—but did not deem it expedient that he should in the then turbulent and excited period commit himself and his administration to either, beyond what was enunciated in his inaugural address. Personally he was opposed to slavery, but being a constitutionalist, he was as decidedly opposed to the schemes of the abolitionists, and determined, while administering the Federal Government, to abstain from any interference with the local law on this subject, or any of the reserved rights of the States. He had strong hopes that the exciting disunion question would, when his views and intentions were understood, pass away without a serious conflict, and was confirmed in these hopes by the assurances of his selected Secretary of State. Mr. Seward, sanguine by nature, fruitful in expedients, and willing to make concessions, was confident of a speedy restoration of amicable feelings after the change of administration; and his position and opportunities had been such as to inspire

his colleagues as well as the President with a hope that his predictions were not unfounded. Subsequent events proved that these prophetic declarations and assurances, if not baseless, were mere delusions, predicated on no substantial fact or principle, but mere imaginary anticipations of what he would be able to accomplish by expedients. His assurances, if founded on any concert with his opponents, may be taken as an exhibition of his readiness to acquiesce in almost any change of the fundamental law itself to get over a temporary difficulty.

There had been, as the President and his Cabinet were advised, some understanding and concert between Mr. Seward and leading secessionists, as well as with a portion of Mr. Buchanan's Cabinet, from which important results were expected after the 4th of March. What sincerity there may have been on the part of the secessionists with whom he held converse, and what were their expectations, other than an absolute acquiescence in their demands, which the declarations of Mr. Seward in his January speech, and his action and proceedings for several weeks subsequent to the accession of Mr. Lincoln, and his official despatch to Mr. Adams, seem to indicate, may never be fully known. Mr. Edwin M. Stanton, the Attorney-General of Mr. Buchanan, had during the closing months of the Buchanan administration secretly informed Mr. Seward of the proceedings and purposes of the administration of which he was a part; and from these several sources of communication Mr. Seward persuaded himself that he held the key to all discontent, and that when once in place he could reconcile disagreements and lock up all disturbance. Without knowing precisely how his Secretary of State was to restore harmony, Mr. Lincoln trusted at the beginning to the reputation of Mr. Seward for intelligence, sagacity, and ability to accomplish what was prophesied and promised. It was this almost implicit trust in Mr. Seward at the commence-

ment which for a time caused serious embarrassment, and almost forfeited the confidence of the country in the ability and integrity of the President to administer the government.

Mr. Chase, though an avowed anti-slavery man, was solicitous that it should be understood he was not an abolitionist, nor connected with that organization. The schemes for compromise, especially such as involved a change of the Constitution in behalf of slavery, or committed the Government to the support or perpetuation of human bondage in any form, beyond the compromises already made, he strenuously opposed. But he was possessed of unappeasable ambition for official power and distinction; not that he desired power for personal aggrandizement, but from a belief that he could in position do more than others for his country and for freedom. But the discussions in the winter of 1861, the excitable and persistent determination of the authorities of South Carolina and the Gulf States to throw off Federal allegiance, with the readiness of Mr. Seward to "meet exactation with concession," and an expressed willingness to change the Constitution in fundamental particulars to conciliate the secessionists, were incidents not without their influence on the course of Mr. Chase. While he would not consent or be a party to a change of the Constitution in behalf of slavery, he became impressed with doubts and misgivings, from what he heard and witnessed of the emphatic determination of the secession leaders, and from the countenance and support given them by the Democrats in the free States, from the yielding disposition of Mr. Seward, Mr. Crittenden, and other Republicans and friends of the new administration, who were willing to compromise and even to reconstruct the government in order to preserve the national territorial integrity, whether the Union of the States could be maintained. Reconciliation he considered impossible. Civil war he deprecated, and the way to extir-

cate the country from its embarrassment and sustain the Government was, he confessed, dark and inexplicable. I was pained beyond measure, or my ability to express, when, retiring one morning from a Cabinet consultation, he made known to me his doubts and misgivings, and that he had come to the conclusion it was best that the States which desired to leave the Union should be permitted to go without hindrance. It was not to be denied, he said, that our government was not one of force, yet it was manifest the Union could not be maintained except by compulsion, and a compulsory Union would be no Union, but war, contention, a despotic exercise of power. In what could this and would this terminate, but an utter subversion of our system and of republican government?

It was near the last of the month of March that he thus opened his mind to me. He probably had not at that time communicated his views or speculations to any other person. He certainly had made no such intimations in any of the Cabinet consultations. We had left the executive mansion together that morning after a pretty earnest and anxious discussion of the condition of affairs and the threatened difficulties, without any satisfactory conclusion; but it was obvious that Mr. Seward had taken even a more advanced step in that direction than Mr. Chase, and was prepared to surrender Sumter and other forts in the seceding States to the local authorities, to call a national convention to revise the Constitution and reconstruct the government. The attitude of Mr. Seward caused me little surprise; for it was well understood by those who knew him that he was an optimist, governed less by convictions and fixed laws than by expedients, and that he had more faith in his skill and management to govern and accomplish a purpose than in the Constitution or any political principle; but the suggestions of Mr. Chase, who was at the time greatly depressed and dis-

couraged, astounded and shocked me. I so expressed myself. He said secession, in his opinion, would be no permanent alienation; the seceding States would, after a brief experience, be satisfied that the benefits of the Union greatly exceeded any real or fancied grievance, and they would themselves soon ask to be again admitted. My views were that the Union, when once broken, like shattered glass, could never again be made whole. I so expressed myself in one or two interviews which immediately followed. With the hurried and momentous events that were shortly precipitated upon the country, his doubts were dissipated, his confidence in the Union was strengthened, and the duty and necessity of putting forth the whole power and energy of the Administration to preserve it never thereafter faltered.

On these points the other members of the Cabinet were a unit, firm and unswerving for the Union, though one or two of them were reported to have favored the Crittenden compromise. Mr. Blair, who resided in Washington, and was familiar with the men, and had watched the schemes of the disunionists, was wholly opposed to any temporizing, and to all proposed expedients which abandoned old landmarks. From the first he insisted that the Administration would be delinquent if it failed to exercise promptly and energetically the power with which it was invested to suppress insurrection and every attempt at resistance to the government and laws. The greater the delay, and the longer the Administration hesitated, the more serious would be the consequences to the country. His position was antagonistic to that of Mr. Seward from the commencement; and he never, as did Mr. Chase, doubted.

The President listened to the views and suggestions of each and all, but wisely forbore to hastily commit himself. What he wished was, first of all, delay until the Administration could get in working order, so that the whole

country should be aware of his intention to administer the government faithfully, without prejudice or sectional partiality. With prudent sagacity he cautiously pursued his way, carefully observing and weighing the views of each of his counsellors, and every suggestion made, vigilantly watching events, and feeling the public pulse.

The repeal of the Missouri compromise had caused great irritation. He inquired whether, in the opinion of the Cabinet, a restoration of that compromise would serve to allay excitement, but received no favorable response. He, and many others doubtless, attached greater importance to that unwise and injudicious proceeding than it merited. The repeal of the compromise was an impolitic act, which had undoubtedly greatly aggravated the prevailing discontent; but it was one of the incidents, not the primary cause of sectional contention. It was stated that while the repeal was uncalled for and injudicious, after the long acquiescence of the country in the enactment, its restoration would not promote harmony, for the compromise was, in itself, a violation of the principles on which our federal structure was founded; that it created sectional distinction; had generated sectionalism by permitting and professing to give legal sanction to favored residents south of a particular parallel of latitude, by conferring on them certain rights and the exercise of certain powers which were denied to all residing north of that parallel; that the Federal Government was not authorized to make such distinction; that equality of political rights to all of the States was a dogma or fundamental principle of our government; that among the grants of power specified in the Constitution there was none which authorized Congress to establish slavery, yet by the Missouri compromise act Congress had assumed the power to establish or permit it south of the latitude 36 deg. 30 min., and to exclude it north of that line. If slavery

was a privilege or right, those above as well as those below the line were entitled to it; for all sections and States were to be treated alike. If it was not a privilege or right, Congress had committed a great wrong in authorizing or attempting to authorize it. Had Congress done its duty faithfully in 1820, instead of compromising and evading it, we should have been spared present evils, and it did not become the Administration to sanction and attempt to reestablish a palpable wrong.

Whatever expedients, schemes, or ideas of compromise any members of the Government may have entertained or projected to satisfy the disunionists, none were adopted, and the policy of Mr. Lincoln was to adhere to the Constitution and observe its requirements and restrictions, without innovations or any change of the organic law, to appease factions. This was of course unsatisfactory to the secessionists, who claimed that these States had already withdrawn from the Union and established a separate government.

On the day of his inauguration Mr. Lincoln received through President Buchanan information from Major Anderson, in command of Fort Sumter, that the supplies of his garrison would be exhausted in six weeks. On the succeeding day commissioners from the confederacy of the insurrectionary States arrived in Washington, and soon after requested of the Secretary of State that a day might be named when they could present their credentials to President Lincoln. An answer was, by concert or understanding between the commissioners and Mr. Seward, delayed for a month. In the mean time the affairs of the government and country, which, with the changes of administration and a new order of things, had been in something of a chaotic condition, were in a degree arranged.

While overwhelmed by the disorders and disturbances growing out of the insurrection, the Administration was also beset on every hand to make al-

most universal and indiscriminate party changes of the Federal officers. The President and some of the Cabinet, particularly the Secretary of State, were disposed to go beyond others in these respects. It was claimed, on one hand, that only Democrats held Federal appointments, but it was said on the other hand that many of these were Union men, opposed to secession, who in their devotion to country had risen above mere party, and that it would be politic and wise to make a distinction between them and those extreme partisans who were secessionists, or sympathizers with the secessionists; that while, from the very long continuance of Democrats in power, most of the office-holders were of that party, it was evident that in the departments, especially bureau officers and clerks who were faithful and familiar with their duties and knew the acts and traditions of the government and the departments to which they were attached, should be retained, unless they were disunionists or politically offensive, whatever were their private opinions on political questions. Many ardent and extreme party men who were secessionists had, on the change of administration or immediately after, resigned their places. This was particularly the case in the Navy Department, where there was great political demoralization. The voluntary withdrawal of these men, which it was supposed would embarrass the Secretary, in fact relieved him of the necessity of removing many subordinates. Some who remained were not exempt from suspicions, and perhaps one or two from association and social intercourse were infected with the prevailing secession epidemic, but only one, it is believed, proved treacherous or false; nor is it certain that he was guilty of any act of infidelity. In the Navy Department, therefore, nothing of what is called proscription for opinion's sake was exercised; and what was done was in so quiet a manner, was acknowledged to be so just, and in such contrast with some others, that

a clamor was raised against the Secretary for his forbearance. Exceptions had been taken by men who had been ultra Whigs to his appointment as one of the President's advisers, on account of his Democratic antecedents, and it was intimated that his opposition to sweeping and indiscriminate removals by the Administration, and the omission on his part to make changes, was in consequence of old political partialities.

The fact was that extensive removals in his department were unnecessary, for the vacancies created could not be immediately filled by competent persons, in whose ability and fidelity he, in the general break-up, had confidence. Nevertheless, after considerable pressure, and statements of what other heads of departments had done, it was proposed, in order to appease the grumbler, that at least one change should be made in each of the navy bureaus and one in the department proper. This would, it was said, prevent invidious distinction, comparisons, and complaints, as regarded the other departments, and contribute to consolidate and make uniform the policy of the Administration. There was a species of refined political or party casuistry in this, which it was unnecessary to controvert; but as the Secretary knew not the views and opinions of each and all the subordinates with whom he had recently been brought in contact, he preferred that the removals thus ordered should be received and considered as an act of the Administration rather than of the department, and therefore devolved on his chiefs the duty of designating which clerks under the rule should be dismissed. While the Secretary of the Navy declined to remove persons from office who were faithful to the government and true to the Union, whatever had been their party antecedents, some others took a different view, and discharged, with little discrimination, such as were Democrats, regardless of their capacity, experience, fitness, or

fidelity. It was this difference which led the President, who wished uniform policy and action, to make the request or order for the removal of a few clerks in the Navy Department. There were not many civil appointments at the disposal of the Secretary of the Navy, and these were connected with the navy yards. Most of these were then, as now, under the vicious system of putting party electioneers in place, violent partisans. Such were promptly dismissed. It was justly felt that none but reliable and trusty Union men should in the then existing difficulties be retained in positions of responsibility. For years it had been the policy of successful administrations to make sweeping changes of opponents. In the peculiar condition of the country it seemed wise to conciliate and retain such as were patriotic and well disposed, though some opposed it. The President was compelled to face the responsibility and act on these and other questions. In striving to reconcile and bring into united action opposing views, he was accused of wasting his time in a great emergency on mere party appointments. Under the pressure and influences that were brought to bear upon him, particularly by members of Congress, who should never be permitted to dictate appointments, some things were doubtless done which, under other circumstances, and left to himself, he would have ordered differently. Extensive removals and appointments were, in the general disorder, not only expected, but absolutely necessary, beyond previous experience, yet never under any administration were greater care and deliberation required. A host of ravenous partisans from Maine to California—a large proportion of them Whigs long excluded from office, but who had participated in the election of Mr. Lincoln—filled Washington, and, backed by their Senators and Representatives, besieged the White House and departments, demanding for themselves or their friends the local appointments, regard-

less of the patriotism or real merits of the incumbents. This crowd of active friends, with their importunities, at such a crisis, was of course embarrassing to the new Administration, which commenced its labors with a demoralized government and crumbling Union that needed the vigilant attention of the wisest and most considerate statesmanship for its preservation. Not until the adjournment of the Senate, which held an extra session as usual on the change of administration, was there any let-up on the subject of removals from office.

In the mean time the Administration was not remiss in attention to the condition of the country and the disordered state of public affairs. Some members of the Government were confident that hostilities of a serious character would be avoided—all hoped such might be the case; but there were others who believed a conflict more or less serious was inevitable. The President, though a patient listener to the views and suggestions of others, was nevertheless a keen and attentive observer of all that was said and done, and promised to be done, but he came to no hasty conclusion. His final decision for the relief of Fort Sumter, the most important and immediate question pending, was postponed until the supplies of the garrison were nearly exhausted. To the last moment he and his Cabinet indulged the hope that peace would be preserved; but the insurrection had proceeded to such lengths that it was not doubted resistance to collecting the revenue would be attempted. In this he was confirmed by General Scott, to whose opinion he early paid great deference, and General Scott, remembering the old nullification conflict under Jackson, apprehended and hoped that the culminating point would be, not in reinforcing Sumter, but in the enforced collection of duties on imports. In fact, both General Scott and Mr. Seward, acting in concert, advised and expected the evacuation of Sumter, which would throw

the responsibilities of a collision on the treasury and the navy instead of the military, for the navy would be called upon to sustain the treasury in collecting the duties. Sumter would, in compliance with the advice, and wishes, and views of the Secretary of State and the General-in-Chief, be abandoned. It was at this juncture, and while the determination in regard to Sumter was yet unannounced, that the President, desirous of ascertaining his own strength and that the Administration should know the actual condition of the navy without exciting suspicion as to his purpose, addressed to me the following note:

EXECUTIVE MANSION, March 18, 1861.

SIR: I shall be obliged if you will inform me what amount of naval force you could at once place at the control of the revenue service. And also, whether at some distance of time you could so place an additional force, and how much? and at what time? Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

*Hon. Secretary of the Navy.*

To this I, on the 20th, gave him an answer in detail, stating the condition and position of every naval vessel, whether in or out of commission, and the actual personal force employed or authorized by law to be employed, together with an estimate of the time necessary to fit out the vessels which were in ordinary, and to recall the squadrons that were on foreign stations. The letter of Mr. Lincoln was written fourteen days after his inauguration, and twelve days after the Cabinet was installed. It makes no allusion to Forts Sumter or Pickens, nor to any naval or military operations, offensive or defensive. There was extensive espionage, and every movement of the Administration was watched. If any who favored or expected the evacuation of Sumter and Pickens should see the correspondence, their suspicions would not be stimulated by the information asked and given in reply to an order calling for a statement of the naval force, and how much could be placed at the "control of the revenue service." It was essential that the President should be in possession of the exact condition of the navy should it be necessary to

enforce the collection of the revenue. Had he called for a statement direct without reference to the revenue, or had the Secretary of the Navy presented it without explanation, suspicion would in the then sensitive condition of the public mind in regard to Sumter have been aroused. This would have been particularly the case with those who expected or had given assurance or encouragement that the fort would be evacuated. Besides the Secretary of State and the General-in-Chief, who advocated and had taken for granted that the fort would be surrendered, there were other officials in high position, some of whom soon abandoned the Government, that were in sympathy with the secessionists, but at the time this order was given were watching and waiting events. An attempt to collect the revenue did not alarm them; an order for a naval force to reinforce Sumter would. The Confederate commissioners, who had been permitted to remain in Washington for an answer to their application to be accredited, were in some way secretly advised of every important measure of the Administration almost as soon as it was under consideration. These would have taken instant alarm had a statement of the naval force been bluntly called for by the President while the course in regard to Sumter was being discussed, or if made by the Secretary for naval purposes; but when asked for revenue purposes their apprehensions remained undisturbed. It was all-important for the new Administration to gain time, and the President with shrewdness and forbearance wisely kept his own counsel and asked for naval information for a necessary purpose which excited no alarm, and did not disturb the Secretary of State or General Scott, who advised forcible collection of the revenues. It was not until ten days later, and every day was precious, that he surprised his immediate advisers and

friends as well as his opponents by announcing his intention to send supplies and reinforcements to Sumter. His purpose and determination he had wisely kept to himself; and in referring the letter of Major Anderson to General Scott, to ascertain the military view of the subject, as well as in subsequent Cabinet consultations to obtain the opinions of his associates, he was reserved; but he never, at any time, wavered from the principles and stand taken at the beginning of his administration, and enunciated in his inaugural address. His Cabinet and others concluded, from his reference of the subject to the General-in-Chief, that the reinforcement of Sumter was to be disposed of as a military question, and consequently acquiesced in the report of Generals Scott and Totten, but the President himself did not deviate from his original design. A knowledge of the military and naval resources at his disposal was, however, necessary, and without imparting his intention, and to cover his purpose, he inquired what force could be "at once placed at the control of the revenue service." Neither the Secretary of State nor General Scott supposed that this information was sought for any other than revenue purposes. Sumter they supposed was, as they had recommended, to be abandoned, and they beyond all others were overwhelmed with surprise when, ten days later, the President announced his determination, so contrary to their advice and expectations. The sagacity, decision, and administrative and executive ability of Mr. Lincoln are exemplified in the skillful manner by which he lulled the suspicions of such of his immediate counsellors as favored a different policy in regard to Fort Sumter. It was the first exhibition of his independent self-reliance, and was conclusive that while he counselled with others, he was himself the President, and acted upon his own convictions

GIDEON WELLES.

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## NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

ACCOUNT OF HIS ADMINISTRATION.—NO. 2.

**A**T the time of Mr. Lincoln's inauguration, the actual existing status and the future of the people—unionists and secessionists—to what extent the law would be resisted on one hand or enforced on the other, were uncertain, indefinite, and unknown. Multitudes, a majority without doubt through the whole of the States South, with perhaps the exception of South Carolina, who had from party considerations or from sincere apprehensions opposed the election of Mr. Lincoln, acquiesced, though disappointed in the result, and were ready to support his administration; but they were not permitted to do this by the leaders who had possession of the seceding State governments. The President, though well aware of the mischievous intent of the prominent persons in this conspiracy, was reluctant to believe they would resort to armed resistance, and entered upon his duties with the kindest and most tolerant feelings toward all, whether friends or opponents of his election.

But party spirit had been moved to excess, and became virulent. Extreme partisans in the free States stimulated and encouraged discontent, and were scarcely less malignant in their feelings than the secessionists. In the slave States the positive element overpowered the mild, passive, and peaceably disposed friends of the Union and

of social order, who deprecated and shrank from violence. The patriotic citizens knew that there was no cause for rebellion or revolution, and, relying on the Federal Government, as in the days of Jackson, for protection against rebels, were comparatively quiet and inert. Bold measures and a decisive and energetic policy on the part of the Federal Government, especially the Executive, at the commencement, such as had been displayed by Jackson in the days of nullification, were necessary for their security, and would at the same time have aroused them to duty and to action.

The executive power of the Government is by the Constitution vested in the President; and to pretermit or disregard the legal and necessary exercise of this power thus delegated to him may be as culpable, and in an emergency may be a greater wrong to the country than the assumption or usurpation of undelegated authority, to preserve the national integrity. Mr. Buchanan had been an intelligent Senator, but was inherently a timid and always a calculating politician, sensitive as regarded his party standing, in consequence of early political equivocations, and was undoubtedly more obedient to party requirements from that circumstance. Intending to do what was about right, but usually relying more on the opinion of his asso-

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ciates than his own convictions—always cautious and irresolute when there was responsibility—he was in those closing days of his administration, with broken and divided counsels, feeble, irresolute, vacillating, and almost imbecile of purpose. Most of his cabinet advisers were unfaithful. The forts of the South were neglected, most of them were without garrisons, and there was stationed in none of the discontented States a military force properly commanded, to sustain the Government and enforce the laws, or to form a nucleus around which the patriotic citizens could rally to maintain the national supremacy against the seceding State governments. The Federal troops, instead of being stationed where they could render efficient service, had been sent, under Twiggs, a traitor and a renegade, to western Texas, or to territories still more remote, from which or from Texas they could not be speedily recalled. The Southern maritime frontier was in scarcely better condition. The commanders of the navy yards at Pensacola and Norfolk, the only naval stations in the Southern States, were old and inefficient officers, who, if not unfaithful themselves, were surrounded by energetic subordinates that were in sympathy with the secessionists, and ultimately proved faithless. Most of the sailors and naval vessels in commission were on foreign stations. Those which constituted what was called the "home squadron" were in the West Indies or the Gulf of Mexico, about as inaccessible and remote from immediate communication, except through the insurrectionary region, as the squadron in the Mediterranean. The treasury was empty, and the national credit had been impaired by the conduct of Cobb, the seceding Secretary, who, until he retired, had charge of the finances. On the change of administration the government was, in all its departments, in a dilapidated and deranged condition, which had been evidently designed by those who had in view a dissolution of the Union.

In the construction of his Cabinet, some of the characteristics of Mr. Lincoln, and the purpose by which he was to be governed in his administration, were developed. New issues had given birth to a new political organization. Old parties had become dismembered and broken into factions. The Democrats were divided, and had presented the previous fall two candidates—Breckenridge and Douglas—for the Presidency. Douglas received and was the undoubted choice of a large majority of his party. He had, however, but few votes from his old opponents. Breckenridge had among his supporters such of the dismembered Whig element of the South as did not give their votes to John Bell, the "Know-Nothing" candidate. If there were men at the South in favor of Mr. Lincoln, or who had a preference for the Republican party and principles, such was the prevailing prejudice and intolerance in that section that no full ticket of electors was permitted to appear. No press was allowed to advocate Lincoln's election, and to express an opinion favorable to either Republican principles or the Republican candidates was attended with no inconsiderable personal peril. The factious and fragmentary condition of the Democratic party, and the violent sectional hostility of the South toward Republicans, had the effect of strengthening and uniting the new party, composed of both Whigs and Democrats, in the free States, and secured for Mr. Lincoln the electoral vote of each and all of them except New Jersey.

Mr. Lincoln was well aware that it was no old and beaten path which he was to travel in administering the government, with veteran associates who had been lifelong political friends engaged in an organization for the same cause, but that without precedents to guide, an untrodden course lay before him, requiring an entirely new and different departure from that which had been pursued by either of his predecessors. Not only was he to estab-

lish an administration differing in many respects from theirs, and to consolidate a new organization, but he was to do this with materials which, in political principles, had been discordant and antagonistic in the past. These previously opposing elements he was to reconcile and bring into harmonious action, and at the same time encounter a violent and unsparing opposition. Quietly, without ostentation, and at the same time without just offence to any, or submission to professed and intrusive advice and influence, voluntarily tendered and pressed upon him, he selected for his constitutional advisers persons who, in their antecedents, had politically been opposed, but who were nevertheless representative men of the various elements which elected him, and constituted at his inauguration the Republican party. In his choice of counsellors he kept in view the original purpose of consolidating these elements into one great united party, which would sustain his administration, and ultimately embrace all who desired to maintain the Constitution and the Union. This purpose, distinctly and honestly avowed, led him to invite his own rival Republican competitors to participate in the administration, and also induced him to associate in his Cabinet men of differing political antecedents. Such a policy, however, did not comport with the views and wishes of some of his friends, who, in the overthrow of the Democrats, had anticipated a Whig triumph rather than Republican success. The pressure upon him in that regard, with a view of reviving the Whig party, was for a time very great; but while he patiently listened and calmly discussed the subject, no argument or appeals caused him to change his original purpose of a Republican administration, without identification with past or committal to current controversies or either of the old political organizations.

The individuals composing his Cabinet had but slight previous personal

intimacy with Mr. Lincoln, or with each other. There was no concerted or combined effort among the members themselves, or by their respective friends, to influence the President in selecting his advisers, with the exception, perhaps, of a few managing politicians in New York and Pennsylvania. A very strenuous and persistent effort was made by certain partisans in New York, who had been Whigs, to exclude Mr. Chase, and also to prevent the appointment of either Mr. Blair or Mr. Welles.

In the nominating convention at Chicago Mr. Seward had been the chief competitor with Mr. Lincoln, and being also a well known politician and statesman, holding at the time the position of Senator from the State of New York, it was not only desired by his friends, but supposed and generally expected, that he would be offered the State Department. It was intimated by some of his confidential friends that while the tender of this place was due as a matter of courtesy to Mr. Seward, that gentleman would probably decline accepting the office. In that event it was the intention of Mr. Lincoln, who knew not with what sincerity these doubts of the Senator's acceptance were made, to have invited Mr. Chase to be his Secretary of State. Otherwise the latter gentleman was invited to administer the finances. There was on the part of both Mr. Seward and Mr. Chase coyness as to accepting a seat in the Cabinet, which, as regarded the former, was more affected than sincere. Mr. Chase may have honestly hesitated to take the second position, for he was very ambitious, and had just been a second time elected to represent Ohio for six years in the Senate, and his taste, studies, and abilities were unquestionably better adapted to legislative than purely financial service. While, therefore, he could not have hesitated for a moment to go into the State Department, he was not, with his personal aspirations, so ready to relinquish his senatorial term of six years in order to

accept a seat in the Cabinet subject to the pleasure of the President for its continuance, and which, moreover, placed him, while entering upon duties with which he was not familiar, in a position inferior in public estimation to that of his rival political competitor.

On the great questions which were pending, and which then divided the country, these two gentlemen were not in strict accord. Mr. Seward, less tenacious of principle, and more pliable in his nature, had expressed a willingness to yield his opinions on the slavery question, and to so revise the Constitution as to make it conform to the demands of the secessionists. Mr. Chase, on the contrary, was opposed to any concession or compromise which should commit the national Government to the cause or to the perpetuation of slavery beyond the limits prescribed in the Constitution. Mr. Lincoln was well aware of the differences between these two officers—differences which extended to his supporters—but did not deem it expedient that he should in the then turbulent and excited period commit himself and his administration to either, beyond what was enunciated in his inaugural address. Personally he was opposed to slavery, but being a constitutionalist, he was as decidedly opposed to the schemes of the abolitionists, and determined, while administering the Federal Government, to abstain from any interference with the local law on this subject, or any of the reserved rights of the States. He had strong hopes that the exciting disunion question would, when his views and intentions were understood, pass away without a serious conflict, and was confirmed in these hopes by the assurances of his selected Secretary of State. Mr. Seward, sanguine by nature, fruitful in expedients, and willing to make concessions, was confident of a speedy restoration of amicable feelings after the change of administration; and his position and opportunities had been such as to inspire

his colleagues as well as the President with a hope that his predictions were not unfounded. Subsequent events proved that these prophetic declarations and assurances, if not baseless, were mere delusions, predicated on no substantial fact or principle, but mere imaginary anticipations of what he would be able to accomplish by expedients. His assurances, if founded on any concert with his opponents, may be taken as an exhibition of his readiness to acquiesce in almost any change of the fundamental law itself to get over a temporary difficulty.

There had been, as the President and his Cabinet were advised, some understanding and concert between Mr. Seward and leading secessionists, as well as with a portion of Mr. Buchanan's Cabinet, from which important results were expected after the 4th of March. What sincerity there may have been on the part of the secessionists with whom he held converse, and what were their expectations, other than an absolute acquiescence in their demands, which the declarations of Mr. Seward in his January speech, and his action and proceedings for several weeks subsequent to the accession of Mr. Lincoln, and his official despatch to Mr. Adams, seem to indicate, may never be fully known. Mr. Edwin M. Stanton, the Attorney-General of Mr. Buchanan, had during the closing months of the Buchanan administration secretly informed Mr. Seward of the proceedings and purposes of the administration of which he was a part; and from these several sources of communication Mr. Seward persuaded himself that he held the key to all discontent, and that when once in place he could reconcile disagreements and lock up all disturbance. Without knowing precisely how his Secretary of State was to restore harmony, Mr. Lincoln trusted at the beginning to the reputation of Mr. Seward for intelligence, sagacity, and ability to accomplish what was prophesied and promised. It was this almost implicit trust in Mr. Seward at the commence-

ment which for a time caused serious embarrassment, and almost forfeited the confidence of the country in the ability and integrity of the President to administer the government.

Mr. Chase, though an avowed anti-slavery man, was solicitous that it should be understood he was not an abolitionist, nor connected with that organization. The schemes for compromise, especially such as involved a change of the Constitution in behalf of slavery, or committed the Government to the support or perpetuation of human bondage in any form, beyond the compromises already made, he strenuously opposed. But he was possessed of unappeasable ambition for official power and distinction; not that he desired power for personal aggrandizement, but from a belief that he could in position do more than others for his country and for freedom. But the discussions in the winter of 1861, the excitable and persistent determination of the authorities of South Carolina and the Gulf States to throw off Federal allegiance, with the readiness of Mr. Seward to "meet exaction with concession," and an expressed willingness to change the Constitution in fundamental particulars to conciliate the secessionists, were incidents not without their influence on the course of Mr. Chase. While he would not consent or be a party to a change of the Constitution in behalf of slavery, he became impressed with doubts and misgivings, from what he heard and witnessed of the emphatic determination of the secession leaders, and from the countenance and support given them by the Democrats in the free States, from the yielding disposition of Mr. Seward, Mr. Crittenden, and other Republicans and friends of the new administration, who were willing to compromise and even to reconstruct the government in order to preserve the national territorial integrity, whether the Union of the States could be maintained. Reconciliation he considered impossible. Civil war he deprecated, and the way to extri-

cate the country from its embarrassment and sustain the Government was, he confessed, dark and inexplicable. I was pained beyond measure, or my ability to express, when, retiring one morning from a Cabinet consultation, he made known to me his doubts and misgivings, and that he had come to the conclusion it was best that the States which desired to leave the Union should be permitted to go without hindrance. It was not to be denied, he said, that our government was not one of force, yet it was manifest the Union could not be maintained except by compulsion, and a compulsory Union would be no Union, but war, contention, a despotic exercise of power. In what could this and would this terminate, but an utter subversion of our system and of republican government?

It was near the last of the month of March that he thus opened his mind to me. He probably had not at that time communicated his views or speculations to any other person. He certainly had made no such intimations in any of the Cabinet consultations. We had left the executive mansion together that morning after a pretty earnest and anxious discussion of the condition of affairs and the threatened difficulties, without any satisfactory conclusion; but it was obvious that Mr. Seward had taken even a more advanced step in that direction than Mr. Chase, and was prepared to surrender Sumter and other forts in the seceding States to the local authorities, to call a national convention to revise the Constitution and reconstruct the government. The attitude of Mr. Seward caused me little surprise; for it was well understood by those who knew him that he was an optimist, governed less by convictions and fixed laws than by expedients, and that he had more faith in his skill and management to govern and accomplish a purpose than in the Constitution or any political principle; but the suggestions of Mr. Chase, who was at the time greatly depressed and dis-

couraged, astounded and shocked me. I so expressed myself. He said secession, in his opinion, would be no permanent alienation; the seceding States would, after a brief experience, be satisfied that the benefits of the Union greatly exceeded any real or fancied grievance, and they would themselves soon ask to be again admitted. My views were that the Union, when once broken, like shattered glass, could never again be made whole. I so expressed myself in one or two interviews which immediately followed. With the hurried and momentous events that were shortly precipitated upon the country, his doubts were dissipated, his confidence in the Union was strengthened, and the duty and necessity of putting forth the whole power and energy of the Administration to preserve it never thereafter faltered.

On these points the other members of the Cabinet were a unit, firm and unswerving for the Union, though one or two of them were reported to have favored the Crittenden compromise. Mr. Blair, who resided in Washington, and was familiar with the men, and had watched the schemes of the disunionists, was wholly opposed to any temporizing, and to all proposed expedients which abandoned old landmarks. From the first he insisted that the Administration would be delinquent if it failed to exercise promptly and energetically the power with which it was invested to suppress insurrection and every attempt at resistance to the government and laws. The greater the delay, and the longer the Administration hesitated, the more serious would be the consequences to the country. His position was antagonistic to that of Mr. Seward from the commencement; and he never, as did Mr. Chase, doubted.

The President listened to the views and suggestions of each and all, but wisely forbore to hastily commit himself. What he wished was, first of all, delay until the Administration could get in working order, so that the whole

country should be aware of his intention to administer the government faithfully, without prejudice or sectional partiality. With prudent sagacity he cautiously pursued his way, carefully observing and weighing the views of each of his counsellors, and every suggestion made, vigilantly watching events, and feeling the public pulse.

The repeal of the Missouri compromise had caused great irritation. He inquired whether, in the opinion of the Cabinet, a restoration of that compromise would serve to allay excitement, but received no favorable response. He, and many others doubtless, attached greater importance to that unwise and injudicious proceeding than it merited. The repeal of the compromise was an impolitic act, which had undoubtedly greatly aggravated the prevailing discontent; but it was one of the incidents, not the primary cause of sectional contention. It was stated that while the repeal was uncalled for and injudicious, after the long acquiescence of the country in the enactment, its restoration would not promote harmony, for the compromise was, in itself, a violation of the principles on which our federal structure was founded; that it created sectional distinction; had generated sectionalism by permitting and professing to give legal sanction to favored residents south of a particular parallel of latitude, by conferring on them certain rights and the exercise of certain powers which were denied to all residing north of that parallel; that the Federal Government was not authorized to make such distinction; that equality of political rights to all of the States was a dogma or fundamental principle of our government; that among the grants of power specified in the Constitution there was none which authorized Congress to establish slavery, yet by the Missouri compromise act Congress had assumed the power to establish or permit it south of the latitude 36 deg. 30 min., and to exclude it north of that line. If slavery

was a privilege or right, those above as well as those below the line were entitled to it; for all sections and States were to be treated alike. If it was not a privilege or right, Congress had committed a great wrong in authorizing or attempting to authorize it. Had Congress done its duty faithfully in 1820, instead of compromising and evading it, we should have been spared present evils, and it did not become the Administration to sanction and attempt to reestablish a palpable wrong.

Whatever expedients, schemes, or ideas of compromise any members of the Government may have entertained or projected to satisfy the disunionists, none were adopted, and the policy of Mr. Lincoln was to adhere to the Constitution and observe its requirements and restrictions, without innovations or any change of the organic law, to appease factions. This was of course unsatisfactory to the secessionists, who claimed that these States had already withdrawn from the Union and established a separate government.

On the day of his inauguration Mr. Lincoln received through President Buchanan information from Major Anderson, in command of Fort Sumter, that the supplies of his garrison would be exhausted in six weeks. On the succeeding day commissioners from the confederacy of the insurrectionary States arrived in Washington, and soon after requested of the Secretary of State that a day might be named when they could present their credentials to President Lincoln. An answer was, by concert or understanding between the commissioners and Mr. Seward, delayed for a month. In the mean time the affairs of the government and country, which, with the changes of administration and a new order of things, had been in something of a chaotic condition, were in a degree arranged.

While overwhelmed by the disorders and disturbances growing out of the insurrection, the Administration was also beset on every hand to make al-

most universal and indiscriminate party changes of the Federal officers. The President and some of the Cabinet, particularly the Secretary of State, were disposed to go beyond others in these respects. It was claimed, on one hand, that only Democrats held Federal appointments, but it was said on the other hand that many of these were Union men, opposed to secession, who in their devotion to country had risen above mere party, and that it would be politic and wise to make a distinction between them and those extreme partisans who were secessionists, or sympathizers with the secessionists; that while, from the very long continuance of Democrats in power, most of the office-holders were of that party, it was evident that in the departments, especially bureau officers and clerks who were faithful and familiar with their duties and knew the acts and traditions of the government and the departments to which they were attached, should be retained, unless they were disunionists or politically offensive, whatever were their private opinions on political questions. Many ardent and extreme party men who were secessionists had, on the change of administration or immediately after, resigned their places. This was particularly the case in the Navy Department, where there was great political demoralization. The voluntary withdrawal of these men, which it was supposed would embarrass the Secretary, in fact relieved him of the necessity of removing many subordinates. Some who remained were not exempt from suspicions, and perhaps one or two from association and social intercourse were infected with the prevailing secession epidemic, but only one, it is believed, proved treacherous or false; nor is it certain that he was guilty of any act of infidelity. In the Navy Department, therefore, nothing of what is called proscription for opinion's sake was exercised; and what was done was in so quiet a manner, was acknowledged to be so just, and in such contrast with some others, that

a clamor was raised against the Secretary for his forbearance. Exceptions had been taken by men who had been ultra Whigs to his appointment as one of the President's advisers, on account of his Democratic antecedents, and it was intimated that his opposition to sweeping and indiscriminate removals by the Administration, and the omission on his part to make changes, was in consequence of old political partialities.

The fact was that extensive removals in his department were unnecessary, for the vacancies created could not be immediately filled by competent persons, in whose ability and fidelity he, in the general break-up, had confidence. Nevertheless, after considerable pressure, and statements of what other heads of departments had done, it was proposed, in order to appease the grumblers, that at least one change should be made in each of the navy bureaus and one in the department proper. This would, it was said, prevent invidious distinction, comparisons, and complaints, as regarded the other departments, and contribute to consolidate and make uniform the policy of the Administration. There was a species of refined political or party casuistry in this, which it was unnecessary to controvert; but as the Secretary knew not the views and opinions of each and all the subordinates with whom he had recently been brought in contact, he preferred that the removals thus ordered should be received and considered as an act of the Administration rather than of the department, and therefore devolved on his chiefs the duty of designating which clerks under the rule should be dismissed. While the Secretary of the Navy declined to remove persons from office who were faithful to the government and true to the Union, whatever had been their party antecedents, some others took a different view, and discharged, with little discrimination, such as were Democrats, regardless of their capacity, experience, fitness, or

fidelity. It was this difference which led the President, who wished uniform policy and action, to make the request or order for the removal of a few clerks in the Navy Department. There were not many civil appointments at the disposal of the Secretary of the Navy, and these were connected with the navy yards. Most of these were then, as now, under the vicious system of putting party electioneers in place, violent partisans. Such were promptly dismissed. It was justly felt that none but reliable and trusty Union men should in the then existing difficulties be retained in positions of responsibility. For years it had been the policy of successful administrations to make sweeping changes of opponents. In the peculiar condition of the country it seemed wise to conciliate and retain such as were patriotic and well disposed, though some opposed it. The President was compelled to face the responsibility and act on these and other questions. In striving to reconcile and bring into united action opposing views, he was accused of wasting his time in a great emergency on mere party appointments. Under the pressure and influences that were brought to bear upon him, particularly by members of Congress, who should never be permitted to dictate appointments, some things were doubtless done which, under other circumstances, and left to himself, he would have ordered differently. Extensive removals and appointments were, in the general disorder, not only expected, but absolutely necessary, beyond previous experience, yet never under any administration were greater care and deliberation required. A host of ravenous partisans from Maine to California—a large proportion of them Whigs long excluded from office, but who had participated in the election of Mr. Lincoln—filled Washington, and, backed by their Senators and Representatives, besieged the White House and departments, demanding for themselves or their friends the local appointments, regard-

less of the patriotism or real merits of the incumbents. This crowd of active friends, with their importunities, at such a crisis, was of course embarrassing to the new Administration, which commenced its labors with a demoralized government and crumbling Union that needed the vigilant attention of the wisest and most considerate statesmanship for its preservation. Not until the adjournment of the Senate, which held an extra session as usual on the change of administration, was there any let-up on the subject of removals from office.

In the mean time the Administration was not remiss in attention to the condition of the country and the disordered state of public affairs. Some members of the Government were confident that hostilities of a serious character would be avoided—all hoped such might be the case; but there were others who believed a conflict more or less serious was inevitable. The President, though a patient listener to the views and suggestions of others, was nevertheless a keen and attentive observer of all that was said and done, and promised to be done, but he came to no hasty conclusion. His final decision for the relief of Fort Sumter, the most important and immediate question pending, was postponed until the supplies of the garrison were nearly exhausted. To the last moment he and his Cabinet indulged the hope that peace would be preserved; but the insurrection had proceeded to such lengths that it was not doubted resistance to collecting the revenue would be attempted. In this he was confirmed by General Scott, to whose opinion he early paid great deference, and General Scott, remembering the old nullification conflict under Jackson, apprehended and hoped that the culminating point would be, not in reinforcing Sumter, but in the enforced collection of duties on imports. In fact, both General Scott and Mr. Seward, acting in concert, advised and expected the evacuation of Sumter, which would throw

the responsibilities of a collision on the treasury and the navy instead of the military, for the navy would be called upon to sustain the treasury in collecting the duties. Sumter would, in compliance with the advice, and wishes, and views of the Secretary of State and the General-in-Chief, be abandoned. It was at this juncture, and while the determination in regard to Sumter was yet unannounced, that the President, desirous of ascertaining his own strength and that the Administration should know the actual condition of the navy without exciting suspicion as to his purpose, addressed to me the following note:

EXECUTIVE MANSION, March 18, 1861.

SIR: I shall be obliged if you will inform me what amount of naval force you could at once place at the control of the revenue service. And also, whether at some distance of time you could so place an additional force, and how much? and at what time? Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

*Hon. Secretary of the Navy.*

To this I, on the 20th, gave him an answer in detail, stating the condition and position of every naval vessel, whether in or out of commission, and the actual personal force employed or authorized by law to be employed, together with an estimate of the time necessary to fit out the vessels which were in ordinary, and to recall the squadrons that were on foreign stations. The letter of Mr. Lincoln was written fourteen days after his inauguration, and twelve days after the Cabinet was installed. It makes no allusion to Forts Sumter or Pickens, nor to any naval or military operations, offensive or defensive. There was extensive espionage, and every movement of the Administration was watched. If any who favored or expected the evacuation of Sumter and Pickens should see the correspondence, their suspicions would not be stimulated by the information asked and given in reply to an order calling for a statement of the naval force, and how much could be placed at the "control of the revenue service." It was essential that the President should be in possession of the exact condition of the navy should it be necessary to

enforce the collection of the revenue. Had he called for a statement direct without reference to the revenue, or had the Secretary of the Navy presented it without explanation, suspicion would in the then sensitive condition of the public mind in regard to Sumter have been aroused. This would have been particularly the case with those who expected or had given assurance or encouragement that the fort would be evacuated. Besides the Secretary of State and the General-in-Chief, who advocated and had taken for granted that the fort would be surrendered, there were other officials in high position, some of whom soon abandoned the Government, that were in sympathy with the secessionists, but at the time this order was given were watching and waiting events. An attempt to collect the revenue did not alarm them; an order for a naval force to reinforce Sumter would. The Confederate commissioners, who had been permitted to remain in Washington for an answer to their application to be accredited, were in some way secretly advised of every important measure of the Administration almost as soon as it was under consideration. These would have taken instant alarm had a statement of the naval force been bluntly called for by the President while the course in regard to Sumter was being discussed, or if made by the Secretary for naval purposes; but when asked for revenue purposes their apprehensions remained undisturbed. It was all-important for the new Administration to gain time, and the President with shrewdness and forbearance wisely kept his own counsel and asked for naval information for a necessary purpose which excited no alarm, and did not disturb the Secretary of State or General Scott, who advised forcible collection of the revenues. It was not until ten days later, and every day was precious, that he surprised his immediate advisers and

friends as well as his opponents by announcing his intention to send supplies and reinforcements to Sumter. His purpose and determination he had wisely kept to himself; and in referring the letter of Major Anderson to General Scott, to ascertain the military view of the subject, as well as in subsequent Cabinet consultations to obtain the opinions of his associates, he was reserved; but he never, at any time, wavered from the principles and stand taken at the beginning of his administration, and enunciated in his inaugural address. His Cabinet and others concluded, from his reference of the subject to the General-in-Chief, that the reinforcement of Sumter was to be disposed of as a military question, and consequently acquiesced in the report of Generals Scott and Totten, but the President himself did not deviate from his original design. A knowledge of the military and naval resources at his disposal was, however, necessary, and without imparting his intention, and to cover his purpose, he inquired what force could be "at once placed at the control of the revenue service." Neither the Secretary of State nor General Scott supposed that this information was sought for any other than revenue purposes. Sumter they supposed was, as they had recommended, to be abandoned, and they beyond all others were overwhelmed with surprise when, ten days later, the President announced his determination, so contrary to their advice and expectations. The sagacity, decision, and administrative and executive ability of Mr. Lincoln are exemplified in the skilful manner by which he lulled the suspicions of such of his immediate counsellors as favored a different policy in regard to Fort Sumter. It was the first exhibition of his independent self-reliance, and was conclusive that while he counselled with others, he was himself the President, and acted upon his own convictions

GIDEON WELLES.